PAMPHLET 346

William L. Sayer

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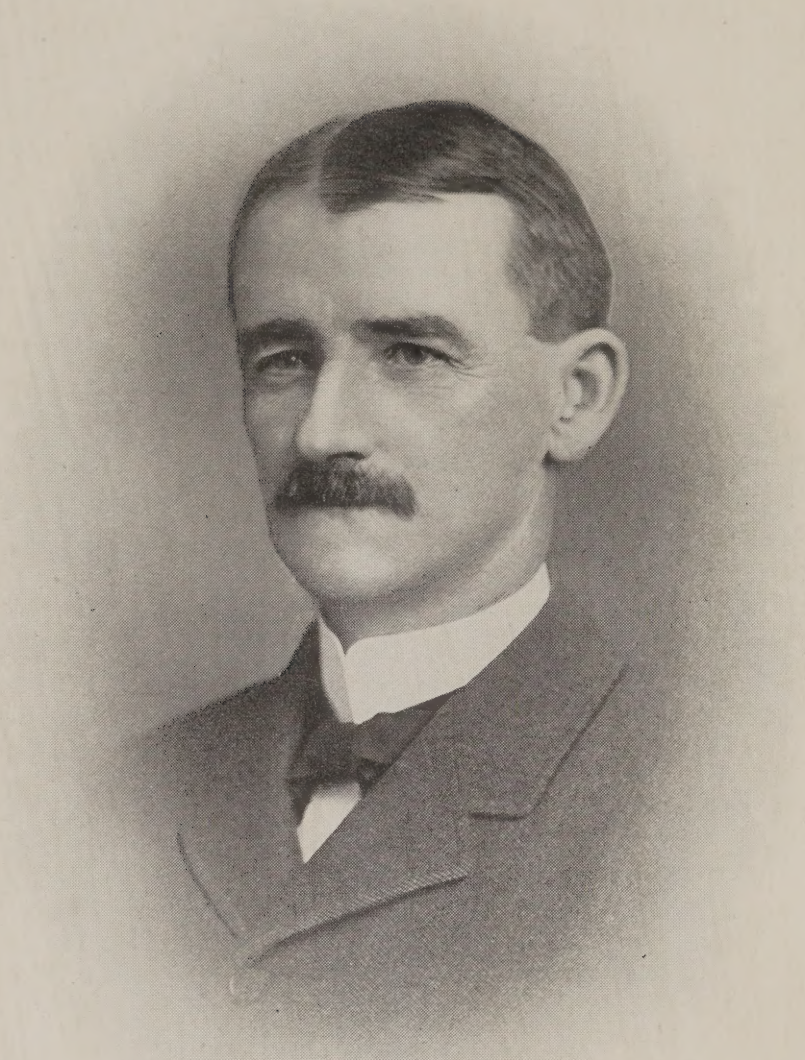

WILLIAM L. SAYER

WILLIAM L. SAYER

FEBRUARY 26, 1848. APRIL 15, 1914

With Compliments of
THE EVENING STANDARD
NEW BEDFORD, MASS.

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Forty-Three Years of Service.

From The Evening Standard, New Bedford, Mass., April 15, 1914:

William L. Sayer, editor of the Standard, and an owner of the Morning Mercury, died at his home on Willis street early yesterday morning, aged sixty-six years. He had been ill but a little more than a week, and absent from the office only since last Thursday. Death was caused by pneumonia, from which disease his wife had died on Sunday. Mr. Sayer was one of New Bedford's best known citizens, his long career as newspaper editor and his activity in many circles of affairs, keeping him in close touch with people in every walk of life. In all these circles he was held in great admiration and esteem.

Mr. Sayer was born in Falmouth, February 26th, 1848. His father, Benjamin L. Sayer, was a clergyman of the Methodist denomination, and was preaching in Falmouth at that time. Until he was sixteen years old, Mr. Sayer shared the itinerant life, which was largely spent on Cape Cod, and most of his school education was received in the public schools of Barnstable and Bristol county towns.

Soon after he was sixteen, he came to New Bedford, and after brief experiences in various occupations, went into the works of the Morse Twist Drill company to learn the machinist trade. Here he remained about four years, when his health broke down, and for a year he was incapacitated for any work. In September of 1871, he entered the employment of Fessenden & Baker, then the owners of the Morning Mercury, as a reporter. Always an omniverous reader, with a taste well trained by contact with the few well chosen books of his father's library, and with a mind mature beyond his years by reason of his training in the clergyman's home, where presiding elders and other thinking folk were visitors, at a time when history was keen in the making and among surroundings in the quiet of the country encouraging to deep conversation and discussion, his attention had for some time before this been turned to newspaper work; and the year of ill-health, with its opportunity for reading and study of the trend of the times, convinced him that that should be his vocation. He had tried to get into the Mercury office before, but had succeeded no further than to have his application placed on file. When an accident removed a reporter from the field and Mr. Sayer was the first to apply for the place, his chance came. Since then he engaged in newspaper work, first in connection with The Mercury and then The Standard, in such a way as to have left an indelible impression upon the community.

In four years and a half after he started to be a reporter, on the first of May, 1876, in company with Stephen W. Booth and Warren E. Chase, both long since deceased, he became an owner in the paper, and so continued, acting as its editor until the 30th of June, 1894, when the firm was dissolved, and Mr. Sayer, George S. Fox, and Benjamin H. Anthony became proprietors of the paper. Mr. Sayer became editor of The Standard on the first of September, 1894, having continued to fill this office and hold his connection with The Mercury in all the years that have followed.

Editorship of a newspaper in New Bedford in those earlier days that followed 1876 involved filling at one time or another, and sometimes at one and the same time, pretty much every office concerned in the paper's management and existence. Mr. Sayer's job was not exclusively at the editorial desk. He was reporter, as well, when occasion required it, and when the exigencies of the mechanical department made it necessary, he was as ready to make up the forms as to prepare the copy and write the editorials.

In the nearly twenty years that he has been editor of The Standard, he has been its chief editorial writer, and in that office has had great influence in molding and shaping local public opinion, and influencing action in a multiplicity of directions.

Mr. Sayer has been directly associated in the management of many community interests. He was elected a member of the school committee from ward five in 1890 and was unanimously re-elected in 1893, but resigned in the fall of 1894. In all

matters connected with school affairs during this period, he was a devoted servant of the people, and his opinions and judgments had great weight with his fellow members. When the sub-committee on manual training was instituted he was its first chairman, and while he was serving as such, the cooking school was established. The manual training school was also established largely through his efforts, though it did not go into operation until a few weeks after he had resigned.

Mr. Sayer was elected a trustee of the Free Public Library in April of 1896, and was chosen clerk of the board immediately on becoming a member. He was re-elected three successive times for three-year terms, and resigned from the office in May of 1906, after ten years of service. As a member of the book-buying committee he rendered especially valuable assistance.

For nearly thirteen years he had been a member of the board of trustees of the Swain Free School of Design, having been elected July 10, 1901; and to the perplexing task of shaping this school's course he brought that intelligence and faithful service that have characterized his professional, public and private life.

He was a director in the New Bedford Co-operative bank; and in the Acushnet Co-operative bank he had also been a director for some years previous to being elected vice president on February 23, 1913.

Mr. Sayer was a director in the board of management of the New Bedford Anti-Tuberculosis association, having been elected to the office when the association was organized in 1908.

Besides his newspaper work in connection with The Mercury, he was at that time the first local correspondent of the Boston Herald and the Boston Sunday Herald in this city. In later years he was for a period of two years an editorial writer for Harper's Weekly. In each of the past three seasons he gave a course of current events talks before the New Bedford Woman's club; and under various auspices he proved himself an able speaker.

Mr. Sayer always believed in a full life. Compelled constantly to guard his health, he lived quietly and sanely, but enjoyed life and filled it fuller than the average with activity and interest. In the midst of the exactions of his many obligations, he found time and interest to be a very considerable book collector, of late years his attention turning especially to the literature in regard to the newspaper press, the law of libel, and notable cases of libel involving the newspaper. The camera has been a diversion in which he reached proficiency.

Mr. Sayer was a member and a deacon of the Trinitarian church, and a member of Acushnet lodge of Odd Fellows.

In October of 1873, Mr. Sayer married Sarah C. Bosworth, and her death on Sunday occurred after a ten days' illness. Mrs. Sayer was a gentle, retiring woman, with a warm place in the hearts of her friends. She was a member of the Trinitarian church, and vice president of its Ladies' Benevolent society. She was a member of the New Bedford Woman's club. They had but one child, and she, Miss Gertrude B. Sayer, survives them. Mr. Sayer also leaves a sister, Mrs. Ruth Annie Nye.

This is not the place to sum up Mr. Sayer's attitude toward life, but it may be suggested by a quotation from an address he made a few years ago before a body of men connected with one of the churches, speaking on the moral force of the press. "I often wonder what people mean," Mr. Sayer said, "when they talk about the daily newspaper as a moral force, as if somehow it could exert a power different from that which is exerted by other forces, and so subject to principles and to rules differing from those which govern other activities. . . . . Under what obligation is a newspaper owner to be a moral force? In essence, under the same obligation that every other man is. The basis of his obligation is in no respect different from that of his neighbor who manages a cotton mill, or who sells groceries. That is, to be honest, to be fair, to be truthful, to be kind-hearted, to stand up for what is right and oppose that which is wrong, and, generally, to be an upright Christian gentleman. All these are duties of the newspaper man—and of everybody else." Further on in the address he said: "There is many a newspaper editor who could not be pious in his talk if he tried, who makes his decisions in the fear of God."

Mr. Sayer, personally, felt all the responsibility toward life these words implied. How well he succeeded in living up to the best of his large abilities, mentally and morally, the people know; and, realizing, appreciate the more the loss involved in his death.

The Evening Standard

TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 15, 1914.

With faltering pen, with a consciousness of the inadequacy of words to express all that the heart can feel of admiration, and respect and sorrow, we approach the sad service of chronicling on this page the death of him who for twenty years has been its inspiration, and of recording the tribute of his associates on The Standard to one to whom they looked as guide and counsellor and friend. And in so doing, we feel that we are speaking not only for those who have labored with him in the daily task of preparing The Standard for its readers, but for that larger number who, during his forty-three years of newspaper service in New Bedford, have found solace, and help and a clearer vision in his writings.

For nearly twenty years William L. Sayer, as editor of The Standard, devoted himself to the worthy and noble task of sane and illuminating comment on the affairs of his city and the world outside. His preparation for the work from which death has now so suddenly taken him was in that best of schools—the newspaper office. Engaged primarily as a reporter, he found opportunities for usefulness in the counting room, the mailing room, as proof reader and as general utility man, and in this variety of work, unknown in the more highly systematized newspapers of today, laid the foundation of that all-round newspaper knowledge which later he devoted so successfully to the enlightenment of the Standard's readers.

It is impossible to point to any one distinguishing characteristic of Mr. Sayer's editorial writing. He was not a man of a singular accomplishment, not a specialist, but rather a man who had a broad grasp of all things and all men and a gift of getting at the essence of them. His vision of the issues of the day was not the narrow one born of the passion and prejudice of the moment, but the broader one of the humanitarian to whom it is given to know the hearts of men. His skill in the use of English afforded a remarkable instance of what a man may accomplish, in that most subtle and elusive of trades, on the simple but firm basis of a country school education. In lucid, forceful sentences he struck to the core of things, stripping from any topic which he treated the husk of sophistry and sham and bringing into view the kernel of truth. This gift of winnowing the false and fallacious from the true was perhaps his most noteworthy accomplishment, and one that is rarer than it ought to be in these days of short cuts and leaping to conclusions from insufficient facts. To this clarity of vision and this skill in the use of English, Mr. Sayer added not only a thorough knowledge of the history of his country, but an abiding faith in its institutions and its people. His comprehension of problems of the public schools, and his keen insight into educational matters won him in this particular field, the reputation of an expert, as attested by the frequency with which his editorials were reprinted in educational journals. In fact, his editorial acumen, the sound common sense of his opinions, the faith and optimism reflected in his work, which won for The Standard's editorial page the confidence of its readers here at home, gave the paper a high editorial standing throughout New England.

Among his younger associates in The Standard office the universal feeling toward Mr. Sayer was one of respect for his judgment and counsel. His influence for good on those who worked under him it would be impossible to measure. He believed with all his heart in the dignity of his calling and in its opportunities for useful public service. By his example and his utterances he stimulated that quality of loyalty and spirit of corps without which no newspaper can be successfully conducted. By his advocacy of worthy causes and his uncompromising hostility towards evil, he taught those who were following him that the one great aim of the newspaper man must ever be the truth. And because we who have worked with him and under him know these things, this meagre wreath of appreciation is proferred as a token of what we feel in the sad moment when death has taken from us a kind and helpful friend and adviser and stopped his pen forever.

MORNING MERCURY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1914.

"He shrank from praise, this simple-hearted man—
Therefore we praise him! Yet, as he would wish,
Chiefly our praise not for the things he did,
But for his spirit in doing. Ah, great heart,
And humble! Great and simple heart! forgive
The homage we may not withhold! Strong soul!
Who labored day and night in little things
No less than large for the loved country's sake.
* * *
The people! Never once his faith was dimmed
In them his countrymen; ah, never once;
For if doubt shook him, 'twas but a fleeting mood;
Though others wavered, never wavered he.
Though madness, like a flood, swept o'er the land,
This way, now that; though love of pelf subdued
The civic conscience, still he held his faith,
Unfaltering, in man's true-heartedness,
And in the final judgment of free men."

Mr. Sayer was editor of The Mercury from 1876 until 1894, when he became the editor of the Evening Standard. So, for thirty-eight years he has daily expressed opinions and given counsel upon the wide range of topics and problems that have engrossed public attention as the years fled. That he has been so generally accepted in the community as one speaking with authority, a strong, healthy and splendid influence, is the finest tribute that can be paid to his sincerity and his character. "For," as Charles A. Dana once wrote of editors, "a fellow that is practicing arts of deception in the newspaper business may last a little while, but he cannot last long. The man who stays, is the man who has staying power; and the staying power is not merely intellectual, it is moral. It is the character, and people believe in him because they are sure he does not mean anything that is not so."

In the course of the years Mr. Sayer came to write beautifully wrought English, in style conspicuous for directness. He cleared away sophistry, the fallacies, the nonsense. that so often encumber the discussion of public questions, and presented the real principles involved. If the principle could not stand the test of common sense, which Mr. Sayer could apply with the skill of one whose brain was well balanced above that of most, or square with the moral law, he showed it no mercy. But the literary excellence of his work or his facility at puncturing the fallacious would have availed nothing had it not been for the character and the personality that was behind the written word, a character that was the legacy from parents who set up right principles and imparted to the son the belief in the eternal and immutable laws of God in the world and the dignity and solemnity of human life.

Through the editorials that Mr. Sayer wrote from day to day during the long period of his service there was one dominant line of thought that was the philosophy of life that he sought to teach. This thought was continually made prominent, introduced over and over again, sometimes in the course of a broad discussion of the hope of a great national future, sometimes in a tribute to a man in humble walks of life. This vital precept was that, wherever placed, a man should take each day's work as it comes, do the best he can with it, leave it behind when night appears and enter upon the task next morning with yesterday gone by forever and tomorrow to be cared for tomorrow.

It is a matter, therefore, of significance that Mr. Sayer was deeply impressed with the little story of John Gilley, written by Dr. Charles W Eliot. John Gilley was a Maine fisherman and farmer and the story describes the life of one of the to-be-forgotten millions. He was born on an island on the Maine coast in 1822. He established a home, improved the few arable fields, fished, set up a porgy oil factory, cured fish. He was careful and particular about all his work, believing in the good results of painstaking care. Nothing very extraordinary happened to make John Gilley famous. Gilley was one of the settlers who cleared fields, made paths by land and water, made a home and reared a family which he left "well provided for, and full of gratitude

and praise for his honorable career and his sterling character." "This is the life of one of the forgotten millions," runs the concluding paragraph of the simple narrative. "It contains no material for distinction, fame, or long remembrance; but it does contain the material and present the scene for a normal human development through mingled joy and sorrow, labor and rest, adversity and success, and through the tender loves of childhood, maturity, and age. We cannot but believe that it is just for countless quiet, simple lives like this that God made and upholds this earth."

In Mr. Sayer's admiration for the career of this plain man who did whatsoever his hands found to do with all his might, we have revealed to us his point of view of a correct life. Mr. Sayer's theory of life was, in the words of another, "not to cherish far-off designs or to plan life too eagerly; but to do what is given us to do as carefully as we can; to follow intuitions; to take gratefully the joys of life; to take its pains hopefully, always turning our hearts to the great and merciful Heart above us." Such was the life Mr. Sayer would have us lead, and so he lived. After deciding simply and sincerely what his path should be, he followed it without regard to any other influence than his conscience—like him

"Who comprehends his trust and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors or for worldly state;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad, for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a soul whose master bias leans
To home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which whereso'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
Forever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause."

Mr. Sayer's view of political problems and duties was sometimes as far over the heads of the practical politicians as the heavens are above the earth, which often led to real perplexity on the part of political parties and candidates who failed to discriminate and sought to make capital of a situation they felt the editor had created for their purposes. He frequently had the experience of "hearing the truth he'd spoken, twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools." A criticism of existing political conditions would, perchance, encourage an alleged reformer to devise a piece of legislation, or condemnation of one official would bring a candidate in the field who would seek to make campaign material of the denunciation. It was likely that the proposed device or candidate would be repudiated with more contempt than would be found in the original article, for Mr. Sayer had very small regard for legislative devices as a method of reform and he could not abide shams. The remedy he sought was the elevation of the people and he looked forward to the new race forming, with the optimism that finds expression in Lowell's essay on Democracy, an admired essay by an admired author. His hope was in the gradual elevation of the moral tone of the people. When that time was reached, laws and candidates would cease to be of consequence. And he had the faith that clasps hands with patience.

Mr. Sayer was under a physical handicap that compelled him to husband his strength from his youth. He found recreation in his home life. But though he might put aside certain pleasures, there were public and civic duties which he persisted in performing—service to the church and on certain unpaid municipal boards, notably the school committee and the trustees of the Free Public Library, service in charity organization work and in the anti-tuberculosis movement, the conduct of a current events class.

It is upon the more intimate relation with the men employed upon the newspapers of New Bedford that we would love to dwell. His influence dominated the men of both newspapers with which he was connected, and will linger, so that we may hope his works will follow him. He was so helpful to us all. No man or boy who worked with him in the two score years of his newspaper life ever spoke of him excepting with loyalty and respect. There are sorrowing hearts among us today at the thought of the empty chair, the disused pen. He is reunited with her who went but a few hours before. And now comes peace.

Z. W. P.

Associates' Tributes.

"In remembrance and honor of noble faculties nobly employed."

The tribute in an old English church to a noted man of an earlier day comes fittingly to mind as worthy memorial to William L. Sayer,—though he would have said the testimonial far overstated his quality and his achievements.

Clipping from a newspaper an editorial that announced in simplest form the death of one of its staff, with the brief but obviously sincere comment that through all his long connection with the paper the deceased had been true to it and true to himself, Mr. Sayer once said:

"If when I am gone that could be honestly said of me, I should count it the greatest of all possible tributes."

And now, when Mr. Sayer is dead, and the words come with a tone of finality that brings keen grief to those left without him in this office, and in this community, the coveted tribute seems all too slight a thing to express the worth and glory of the man. Yet it says the best that can be said of any man. For what is greater than to have been true to the best that was in him,—as he was,—and true to the responsibilities that life placed upon him?

In the midst of the high praise that sounded for him, and in the midst of the occasional criticism that no fearless man escapes, he has said that if he could so live as to keep his own self-respect, nothing else mattered much. What his Maker might think of him was of preeminent importance to him. And in the opinion of those closest to him, he was able to hold himself true to his high purpose.

Mr. Sayer was a lovable man, kindly, sympathetic, friendly, and he was dearly beloved by his associates in both the newspaper offices that were dear to his heart. Respect and esteem were his deserved portion from all who knew him well. He had such a healthy outlook upon life—he was the persistent opponent of gloom. Infinite patience made him content to wait for results, and this led to the tolerant note in all his writings, which was but a reflection of the broad and kindly and tolerant man. His clear mind, broad insight into conditions and situations, and ready power of expression proved a combination that ranked him among the strong editorial writers in the country, and recognition came in the wide quotation of his editorials.

The reading public esteemed his opinon as broad-minded and unprejudiced; his view, well informed; his thought calm and deep; his writing unusually strong and finished English expression. His audiences at his occasional public appearances as a speaker found his speech direct and forceful, in accord with his simple, earnest nature. Mr. Sayer's endorsement of a movement or a cause guaranteed his personal assistance for it, for he did not point a way for others that he had not first been ready to lead in himself—the token of his conscientiousness in all the phases of life.

Life was precious to him. He was alive in every fibre of his being, with energy and zeal and enthusiasm unbounded. He kept his optimism and his enthusiasms, and so he kept that hearty, cordial, wholesouled spirit that kept his life sweet and hopeful and helpful. He was one of the fortunate young in heart, for whom life ever had a new prospect and whom life ever beckons to new endeavor. Never of robust health, he so fostered his energies and conserved his physical abilities, that he achieved beyond the capacity of many a strong man. And in all those relations which he held with others in the management of affairs,—church, schools, library, hospital, co-operative banks, and as adviser and counsellor in endless personal matters, he was relied upon and deferred to; found ready and faithful, giving generously the best help he could bring to the service. In the sacred relations of the home, he was the perfect devoted companion of wife and daughter, and it seems but fitting that he should have followed his wife to the grave in these few days.

Of a deeply religious nature, with religion more to him than dogma or creed; of an intellectuality given to but few men; of a genial spirit that finds life beautiful and a seriousness that finds life earnest, he lived a life of usefulness and helpfulness, of

cheer and charm, that will not soon be forgotten.

We speak of death, and there is a sinking of the heart as though that ended all. But death will not put an end to Mr. Sayer's influence. It has been too real through the past nearly forty years of his newspaper editorial career, and his longer residence here, and too definitely exercised along the lines of progress and uplift, not to have left an indelible impression in the hearts of thinking people, and a strain in the atmosphere to be unconsciously breathed, to the betterment of our moral health. As for himself, it has been his teaching and his feeling that death was but the entrance into the larger opportunities and the higher service, which his life here was a constant training for and a conscious effort to prepare for.

From any point of view from which he may be examined, Mr. Sayer will stand forth in the community's remembrance as a man of noble faculties, and with those faculties so nobly employed that he seems to have brought heaven a bit closer to the earth.

—Ida A. McAfee in The Evening Standard.

A Reason and a Purpose.

No man is understood so well as by his associates. No newspaper man can be judged more fairly than by newspaper men. The layman becomes accustomed to the individuality of the editor and soon learns to judge—sometimes doubt—his fairness. The newspaper man alone—with a full understanding of the duties—can judge the editor on an unbiased plane. Daily contact with a man means admiration or disassociation. There's no middle road in the judgment. To enjoy happiness we must also have the capacity to feel sorrow, for sorrow is as necessary to life's harmonies as are the minors to music. The editor knows this and in handling the plastic mentality of the public it requires a pre-scientific faculty. Editors express, it is true, an individual opinion, the latter frequently in a form easily controverted. This is not serious at all. Go into the honesty of that opinion and then judge. If we do otherwise we are the antithesis of the writer of that opinion. The editor is frequently forced to opinionate when it means much unhappiness for him. One sentence may be the medium of the editor losing the friendship of powerful men; one sentence from the editor's pen may make or break a man; it is an indescribable and far reaching power. The lightest view of an editor's talk shows it to be one of tremendous responsibility. And so when we hear of an editor condemned we do not pity the editor but the unfortunate belittler. With the newspaper man life is different than with the layman. Most every man can talk and there's no redress. A newspaper man must put his thoughts in cold type and stand by results. The editor knows this better than the cub. He moves in a critical atmosphere, above the others; he must say something seriously, not one day, every day. Perhaps today he is called upon to write an editorial that calls for an inspirational effort and forced to write it under the weight of personal sorrow or physical ailment. The opinion is written honestly despite the ravages of material expression. And it's the same the next day and the next until the final ——

Mr. Sayer died in harness, it may be truthfully said. As he left the office the other day he was a sick man, but it did not prevent him from speaking cordially to me and smiling also. It was his nature to love his associates. Recently he honored me by asking of me an opinion. Personally I have sustained a loss, but we who believe that this life is not a rounded out and complete life by itself, merely one stage or primary school of getting the elements for a greater life, feel that there will come a time of a happy reunion; that there is a reason and purpose in all this struggle and stormy experience of life.

"Because I hold it sinful to despond
And will not let the bitterness of life
Blind me with burning tears, but look beyond
The tumult and the strife;

"Because I lift my head above the mist,
Where the sun shines and the broad breezes blow,
By every ray and every raindrop kissed,
That God's love doth bestow,

"Think you I find no bitterness at all,
No burden, to be borne like Christian's Pack?
Think you there are no ready tears to fall
Because I keep them back?"

—C. A. R. in The Evening Standard.

Opinions of the Press.

Sound and Wise.

Genuine sorrow, not only among the newspaper fraternity in this and other cities, but also among a wide circle of friends outside the profession, is felt at the death of William L. Sayer, the dean of New Bedford journalism.

The duties of Mr. Sayer's responsible position were never so onerous as to prevent him from finding the time to aid the younger men who frequently went to him for advice, and his counsel was invariably sound and wise. His editorials, which were widely quoted and commented upon, breathed this same good judgment and common sense in their every line.

He was a survivor of the old school of newspaper work, when the line of promotion to the editorial chair frequently started at the printer's case, and his knowledge of the craft was thorough in every detail. Yet he proved his ability to keep abreast of the times, not only in his writing but in the technical improvements constantly occurring in the newspaper business.

Mr. Sayer found the opportunity to interest himself in numerous civic organizations and took profound interest in general educational and social betterment. He was not only a good newspaper man, but a splendid type of citizen.—New Bedford Times.

Exerted Wide Influence.

William L. Sayer, editor of the New Bedford Mercury from 1876 to 1894, and since then editor of the New Bedford Standard, who died on Wednesday, had for 38 years been responsible for the editorial utterances of the city's leading papers. He was a man of broad views and he discussed the many problems of public interest in an intelligent, convincing and scholarly manner. As a result his opinions were read with interest and extended a wide influence. His personal influence and friendly interest will be greatly missed not only among those who labored with him but among others of the craft who came to know him well.—Fairhaven Star.

Vacancy Difficult to Fill.

William L. Sayer was considered one of the most vigorous, most intelligent and most impartial journalists of this state, his editorials being always read with the greatest interest.

He held office of high responsibility in various public and private institutions, with recognized competency and zeal.

William L. Sayer was always an exemplary man. His death leaves a vacancy difficult to fill.—Translation from O Independente.

Great Loss to New Bedford.

The News tenders to the New Bedford Standard its deep sympathy in the sudden loss of its editor, William Lawton Sayer, who died early Wednesday morning, from pneumonia, while the body of his wife was lying unburied in their home, she having just been smitten down by the same fell destroyer. Seldom is a community touched with an event so fitted to awaken profound sympathy and sorrow.

For many years Mr. Sayer has held his responsible position in the conduct of The Standard. He was a forcible writer, disposed toward the better things and methods in general politics, wielding a trenchant pen, able to state his convictions clearly and forcibly and disposed to make his paper a power for good in the community it served. He has done his share to maintain the reputation and influence of The Standard in southeastern Massachusetts and indeed throughout the commonwealth.

Mr. Sayer was a communicant in the Trinitarian Congregational church, in which he was an officer and a leader. He was yet in the full strength of his manhood and had every reason to expect many years yet of community leadership through his editorial position. The loss to the stricken family circle, to the paper he had served so long and well, to the church and to the community is great; and the News tenders its sympathy to all who share this sudden and doubly heavy bereavement.

"An editor who has a message and who knows how to deliver it" was the just and discriminating toast to William Lawton Sayer, editor of the New Bedford Standard, who died this morning. The occasion of the toast was the memorable dinner given to Mr. Sayer on his sixtieth birthday, In February, 1908, in spontaneous recognition of his high and in some senses unique position in his profession. Grateful as the tribute was to him, it was by no means the sole recognition received by the quiet and studious editor who had worked his way up from the position of reporter on the New Bedford Mercury to a part ownership of that paper, and the chief editor of one of the leading newspapers of Massachusetts. As is the lot of editors who are true to their responsibilities and their privileges, Mr. Sayer had a host of friends among those who knew him well and among those who followed his sane and sound writings without personal acquaintance with him. The breadth of his information, the independence of his thought and the felicity of his style gave to his editorial writings a quality of interest which was undeniable. Always fearlessly honest, he was at times accused of being impracticable in his point of view upon political matters, yet he was possessed of a good business sense, being identified with several concerns as director, and president of the Mercury Publishing company. If an impracticable honesty be a fault in an editor, William L. Sayer would have been the first to cheerfully admit the fault.

To those who knew him intimately Mr. Sayer was a delightful companion, with a wealth of information and carefully formed views. To others he presented a somewhat distant aspect, which was in reality the shield of a natural shyness that could be warmed away most charmingly by acquaintance. Those who worked with him found him the most just and kindly of men, and his keen judgments, sometimes trenchantly expressed, were robbed of any sting by their insight and justice. He knew the newspaper profession from its foundations, and was in his more active years exceptionally constructive in his ideas of what meant success for a newspaper. He was a foe to superficiality and his deep and catholic information of affairs was based upon extensive and constant reading. This knowledge led to his selection some years since as a contributing editor of Harper's Weekly, a position which he subsequently relinquished owing to pressure of work. Mr. Sayer worked constantly with little interval from 1871, when he first became a reporter on the Mercury, up to six days before his death, when an illness seemingly unimportant seized him and progressed with fatal result a few days later. His loss will be distinctly and sadly felt by a circle of friends much wider than those for whom he wrote so entertainingly, so originally and so well.—Fall River News.

Just in His Judgments.

The death of William L. Sayer, editor of the New Bedford Standard, comes as a matter of very sharp regret to those who knew the genial personality hidden under his somewhat shy and reserved exterior. Mr. Sayer was a man whom it was a privilege to know; he was an eminently just man, just in his judgment and in his dealings with others. Particularly was he a man to offer ready help to the young and the ambitious in the profession of journalism. It is with a sense of a duty neglected that I record now, when he cannot know of it, the helpfulness of his attitude towards this column, his appreciation of some of its paragraphs, which he frequently copied in his paper, and his words of advice as to the way to travel the road to success in newspaper writing. He was one of those friends for whom one, unconsciously, however seldom he may meet him, is always doing his best. The loss of his generous and helpful interest can never be quite repaired.—William A. Hart, in "Chat and Comment" in Fall River News.

Broad and Liberal in His Views.

William L. Sayer, for 20 years editor of the New Bedford Standard and for several years previously editor and part owner of the New Bedford Mercury, who died Wednesday at his home in that city, after a few days' illness of pneumonia, was not only an able newspaper writer, but also a citizen of the best type. Courteous and of amiable disposition, he was liked not only by others who had dealings with him, but especially by his co-workers, who esteemed him for many kindly acts. Broad and liberal in all views of the affairs of life, his writings were sound and widely read. A self-made man in all that the term applies, beginning as a mechanic and ending in the editorial chair, he had many opportunities for knowing men and never failed to gauge them accurately. He was born 66 years ago in Falmouth, the son of a Methodist clergyman. Besides his connection with the New Bedford papers, he was for two years an editorial writer for Harper's Weekly. Despite his onerous newspaper duties he gave four years of his spare time to the New Bedford school committee, which he served efficiently, as he did every other undertaking. His death makes a big gap in New Eng-

land newspaper circles and The Herald joins in expressing sorrow at his passing.—Fall River Herald.

Possessed of High Mental Attributes.

By the death of William L. Sayer, editor and chief editorial writer of the New Bedford Standard, the press of the state sustains the loss of one of its ablest and most esteemed representatives and workers. He was a veteran in the ranks of the newspaper fraternity, modest and retiring of nature, but possessed of high mental attributes, a well balanced and keenly analytical mind and capable when the occasion required it of wielding a trenchant and virile pen. His passing will be especial cause for sincere regret among his brethren of the press in this section of the state by whom his worth and attainments were fully appreciated and his friendship highly prized.—Fall River Globe.

Precepts Will Survive Him.

A man of potent influence for good in the community in which he lived, and even beyond, was William L. Sayer, editor of the New Bedford Standard, whose death is announced today. While constantly engaged in the fight for what he felt was right and just and for the betterment of his fellowmen, Mr. Sayer's disposition was always one of self effacement. His opinions on public questions were set forth in a terse and convincing style. They were not, however, the mere personal views of an individual, but rather the mature judgment of a thinker, who, after carefully analyzing the conflicting and divergent ideas of others on a mooted topic, had sifted the truth from the chaff and arrived at a just conclusion. It was Mr. Sayer's habit not to express an editorial opinion on important matters till the question was at least four days old. The salutory effect of this self imposed restraint was evident in his work. When he expressed his thoughts in printed words, he was invariably right. His task here is ended, but those who had the good fortune to come within the scope of his influence must feel, to a man, that the helpful effects of his precepts will survive him as long as memory lasts. —Brockton Times.

An Able Editorial Writer.

In the sudden death of William L. Sayer New Bedford loses a fine and useful citizen. For years the very able editorial writer of the New Bedford Standard, he always battled for what he conceived to be the right, and for the helpful and useful things in life. He had a firm grasp on a wide variety of subjects, and ever had a fresh viewpoint and an interesting and illuminating manner of presenting a subject to the people. New Bedford and The Standard will miss the brilliant veteran.—Brockton Enterprise.

A Virile, Sincere Writer.

Our neighbor, the New Bedford Standard, loses a virile, expressive and sincere writer in the death of its editor, the late William L. Sayer, and the city of New Bedford will miss a prominent, efficient and upright citizen. The columns conducted by Mr. Sayer in the New Bedford Standard were always timely, written effectively and rang true to the ideals of sincerity, honesty of purpose and an intelligent perception of righteousness. It is not saying too much to maintain that much that has been accomplished in the development of New Bedford along the lines of all that is best in civic affairs was due to the strong influence of Mr. Sayer's pen. He did his work thoroughly and without stint and his passing is regretted not only in New Bedford but throughout this section of the state, where newspaperdom long recognized his ability and character.—Taunton Gazette.

A Loss to the Community.

Among the chief charms of the ever welcome New Bedford Standard has been its editorial page which commented upon a varied range of topics with a shrewdness truly Yankee and with such illuminating directness that it was widely read and quoted. And now the man responsible for this page for twenty years, William L, Sayer, has passed. It will be a loss indeed to all who knew him and to the community as well. The number of men who place truth above mere popularity in the public service is not so great that it can be diminished by one without the fact being commented upon. Mr. Sayer was a splendid type of man and his long life leaves a lesson of industry and ideals that cannot but be valued.—Attleboro Sun.

Sane and Always Honest.

New England journalism is made poorer by the death of William L. Sayer, long time editor of the New Bedford Standard. Mr. Sayer's connection with New Bedford covered something like forty years, and to his personal effort was largely due the very high standard of editorial excellence set by the admirable news-

paper which he served. There have been few newspapers in this part of the country more genuinely esteemed, or more widely quoted, than The Standard, for the simple reason that its editorial attitudes were always sane, always honest, and invariably expressed in such wise as to make them at once readable and convincing. It is the fate of editors in these days to do their work impersonally; and therefore Mr. Sayer was known by name to comparatively few of those who read his columns and gladly scissored them for reproduction elsewhere. Fewer still had the pleasure and honor—for it was both—of a personal acquaintance with him. The present writer holds it far from the least of his own advantages to have enjoyed such acquaintance, and pays, on behalf of the Courier-Citizen, this inadequate tribute of affection and respect to a departed co-worker. The relationship subsisting between the Courier-Citizen and the New Bedford Standard has always been peculiarly cordial, largely because of the sympathetic interest which Mr. Sayer took in the editorial work of this office. Sincere differences of opinion on common public questions often led to illuminating personal correspondence with him and occasionally to personal conferences as well, which were exceedingly helpful to this office and, we like to believe, not distasteful to himself. A gentle, quiet, unassuming man, Mr. Sayer performed for his public a service, the value of which it would be difficult—and we believe impossible—to overestimate.—Lowell Courier-Citizen.

A Rare Public Servant.

It is fitting that the loss of a rare public servant should be brought to the attention of the public, with mention of the service rendered. This week William L. Sayer, editor in chief of the New Bedford Standard, died of pneumonia, three days after his wife died from the same cause. Mr. Sayer had been for many years the chief editorial writer of the New Bedford daily. Although he had other newspaper and other business connections, and although it would be possible to give other facts in a long and busy life to his credit, yet, here, in his editorial work, lay his great service to the state and his worthiness of public recognition.

Mr. Sayer was intelligent in his grasp of public issues. He saw the vital element of problems in an unusual degree and he put the truth plainly before his readers. Again, he was loyal to the public welfare in an exceptional degree. He had a high standard of what was due to the public and he rendered that service faithfully and competently. He had much moral courage. He spoke and wrote as his unusually clear conscience and judgment inspired him. He was a Republican in politics and his paper was a Republican paper. Yet he never subordinated the public to the party. He was an independent at heart, always supporting the cause which seemed to him for the best welfare of the public, never following party measures or men unless they had the support of his conscience, and always holding up a high ideal of public service, even at the expense of temporary loss. He was a rare public servant. The people of his constituency have been favored to an unusual degree. His writings have been much copied where their worth was known and discriminating readers came to watch The Standard for its opinion. If his successor fills his chair, the paper, the city and the state will be fortunate.—Raymond L. Bridgman in the Fitchburg Sentinel.

A Real Loss to Journalism.

The death from pneumonia of William L. Sayer, editor of the New Bedford Standard, at the age of 66 years, is a real loss to New England journalism. He was a liberal Republican, who wrote sensibly and often with uncommon power. He was on his job all the time, and left his impress of faithfulness, tact and honor upon the newspaper whose voice he was. No college or school of journalism produced him. He learned the trade of a machinist in New Bedford, but became a reporter on the New Bedford Mercury in 1871, and in due course acquired an interest in the establishment, and was editor of the Mercury for years until 1894, when he became editor of The Evening Standard. He retained his interest in and was president of The Mercury company. The school of experience taught Mr. Sayer many things not written in books, but he read much and grew in strength of expression, until nowhere in New England could sounder opinions be found than in the newspaper wherein he wrote his daily exposition of current affairs. He was not an emotionalist, but he was the friend of all wisely conceived forward looking movements.—Springfield Republican.

A Loss to the Press.

The death of William L. Sayer, for many years editor and chief editorial writer of the New Bedford Standard, brings a pronounced loss to the newspaper profession in New England. Intellect and honesty of purpose combined to invest his editorial writings with a high order of merit, and to make his work a strong asset to the

community served by his newspaper and an inspiration to all conscientious, ambitious newspaper workers who had occasion to peruse from day to day his clear analytical treatment of the questions of the hour.

In his editorial style there was the calm appeal to reason and logic, the brushing aside of fallacies and inconsequential elements, that did not set well with faddists or suit the man who harbored prejudice, but he helped thousands to arrive at just and sound conclusions upon current topics, while being a strong stimulating force for the maintenance of the best traditions of New England. It is impossible to estimate fairly the value of this man's effort as exercised, day by day, during a period of thirty-eight years of service as editor of New Bedford journals. The press can never have enough exemplars of this type.—Springfield Union.

Appreciation of Friends.

Wm. W. Crapo's Tribute.

William W. Crapo said of Mr. Sayer: "I was overwhelmed this morning when I learned of his death. It is a very heavy loss as he was a powerful factor for good in our community."

Found a True Friend in Mr. Sayer.

Editorial Staff of The New Bedford Standard:

Those who advocate as a matter of principle and social necessity the right of the public to freedom of expression through the press have lost a true friend in William L. Sayer.

Chas. A. Blanchett.
103 Ruth street, New Bedford, Mass.

The Page With a Man.

The gain of the man,
The loss of the page.

I find my paper crushed into the door handle tonight. Entering, I light the lamp, throw the match among the kindlings, and turn to the page with a man, the page where I have studied my friend as the days went by. And there. lo, another announces that the man has left the page, and will write to me no more.

Alone, I ponder. This is his evening. Sacred, I make it to my friend, the man of the page. The rain is falling. His paper says, "Rain." The wind draws my fire furiously upward. His face on the page makes my heart mount strangely up with sighs. The night is drear and lonesome. And while thought is slow and eternal the shelf clock ticks, and strikes, and circles toward the morning. I believe in the morning.

He never said he was my friend. Why say it? I needed but the fact. He did not tell me the other day that he was going on a journey. But I, too, shall not tell my friend. Thanks, Stevenson.

"He has but turned a corner—still
He pushes on with right good will."

After all, my friend does me no wrong to abandon his body and press on. Thus he quickens my pace in his direction. What's worth while to him is worth while to me. The gain of the man is the loss of my page. And does William L. Sayer realize the pathos in my soul as he outstrips the sunbeams homeward?

C. Julian Tuthill.

The Just Man's Memory.

The death of William L. Sayer is a great loss to this municipality. He was a public spirited citizen, conscientious, able and fearless in the expression of his views on every important public question. He had no use for shams and the world of superficiality never appealed to him. To him life was real, life was earnest; and along this line of thought he ever made it an active factor in blazing the way to high ideals. To him the voice of duty was the voice of God, and in his newspaper work he hewed to the pathway of right and justice.

With courage undaunted he fought with his pen for the people's meal. He made no truce with the forces of evil, but courageously battled against every influence that sought to undermine our social and political systems. He stood for those ideals which make

for the betterment of the people. Honest and patriotic in his convictions, he had a keen sense of justice in dealing with the rights of others. His depth of thought measured up to all the vital questions of the hour, and the able and convincing logic of his clear defined views commanded attention and won respect.

In this community William L. Sayer was a tower of strength. He was ever ready to mould public thought if by so doing it would tend to benefit the people and their interests. In such a spirit he toiled incessantly with unselfish zeal to serve his fellow citizens through the power of the press. No words of ours can ever pay a just tribute to the memory of such a spirit. In the hour of death words fail to express the deep sense of grief which we feel today at the passing of such a noble man: but true as this may be, one thing we feel and know—the memory of such a gentle and noble life can never perish.

"Peace to the just man's memory. Let it grow
Greener with years and blossom through the flight
Of ages. Let the mimic canvas show
His calm benevolent features. Let the light
Stream over his deeds of love that shunned the sight
Of all but heaven. And in the book of fame
The glorious record of his virtues write,
And hold them up to men and bid them claim
A palm like his, and catch from him the hallowed flame."

T. W. Louis.

The Loss of a Friend.

To the Editor of The Standard:

With the great number of mourners both near and far, I feel included today. For there is no loss in life like the loss of a friend, and particularly, as that friend in his life and his work has proven an asset in the moral, civic and literary life of his day and generation.

Life is rich indeed in our individual friendships. But the word "friend" takes on a larger and fuller meaning when applied to a "cause." William L. Sayer by pen, voice and spirit has shown himself to be a true friend to the life of New Bedford, and no "cause" that was within its domain,—that was possessed of high lofty ideals, ever suffered from lack of his "friendship."

The newspaper profession loses a "friend" in the true sense. His editorials which I have been a constant reader of for nearly 10 years, have been characterized by high, ennobling and dignified sentiments. These are a great legacy in themselves and offer an ideal and a "standard" indeed, worth emulation on the part of his successors.

With men whose lives are a "force," as well as mere "energy," we do not always agree in all things. It is a question, if a great man would want us to, anyway. But "to be honest, to be fair, to be truthful, to be kind-hearted, to stand up for what is right, and oppose that which is wrong" are ideals which we all admire, and few of us are able to realize, as did he.

His was a busy life, but with it all he had time for communion with his God and time to live his religion in the community life around him. With the departure of such enrichening lives, life itself would seem greatly impoverished, were it not for the fact that the smile of their immortality ever beams upon us. For

"Their forms unseen by mortal eye,
Too gracious for our sight to bear,
Are walking with their God on high,
And waiting our arrival there."

J. J. Phelan.

Chicago, Ill.

Genuinely Christian.

To the Editor of The Standard:

I have read with deep interest and appreciation the various tributes to the late William L. Sayer. All of them are remarkable in their unanimity of expression as to the fundamental qualities of this man—his simplicity, sincerity, friendliness and absolute integrity.

It was my privilege, and will be the grateful memory of my life, to have had him for my friend. When in the absence of the Rev. Mr. Julien, I entered for a time the service of the Trinitarian church; his welcome and good will for the young minister in his first charge was ready and warm. He became my good counsellor and my companion. He was constantly inviting me to come in and see him at the office, which however I did not too often do, lest I disturb a busy man. Yet even there he was never too busy to have a pleasant word and some interesting comment for his visitor. Now and then I sought and found in him good counsel for my work as a preacher and writer. Once I remember securing a horse and buggy and inviting him to leave his desk of piled up clippings and go out in the country. Somewhere over in Dartmouth I stopped the horse, dropped the reins, and commanded him to tell me what was the matter with me that my eloquence could not fill the church and that people were not crowding to know the way of the great Master? His gentle and playful and sane and encouraging answers I shall never forget.

I think he liked the frank abandon of my action because he might have known that I got him away in the woods for such a thing as that!

We often had walks and talks together and he has in recent years been a welcome guest in my home. Today I have been reading over again the words of his brief address of welcome to the Trinitarian church work. In that address his whole emphasis was upon my service as a friend. Referring to his being "brought up in the ministry" because of his father's home and the fact that ministers were "as familiar to him as tops and kites were to other boys," he said that one thing was most certain in his mind, that "the minister of the friendly quality was the minister of the most successful service."

"But then continuing he said, "We want a friendship with a heart in it, a frank, straightforward, homely, everyday, manly friendship, beginning and ending in confidence on both sides. . . The highest compact that we can make with our fellow is—let there be truth between us two forever more."

And there you have the setting and spirit of his own friendly, helpful, tolerant, undogmatic, yet genuinely Christian life.

Your city has lost a fine public servant and the church and many good causes a wise and generous counseler and helper. The profession of journalism is far poorer for his death —may his mantle fall on more scribes!

One's belief in the continuance of life beyond the grave is made stronger by such men as he. Regardless of all creeds and doctrines, and dismissing any omniscience about a hereafter, who cannot but feel with Emerson, that

"What is excellent, as God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again."

George M. Butler.

Medford, Mass., April 18, 1914.

Helpful in Church Work.

Mr. and Mrs. William L. Sayer united with the Trinitarian Congregational church July 5, 1892. After the death of Deacons Barrows and Sherman in 1897 Mr. Sayer was chosen deacon and remained in that relation till his death. In the meantime the church lost Deacon Washburn and Deacon Sargent and learned to lean more and more upon Deacon Sayer who has proved to be a worthy successor. His training from youth fitted him to advise and lead in church councils. He was broad-minded and ready to fellowship all who loved the Lord and sought the good of humanity. Many society matters were left to his discretion and he was faithful to them all. He had the esteem and affection of all who were associated with him.

Mrs. Sayer was a helpmeet indeed, kind and unobtrusive; always ready to help, and with her husband making an ideal home. In life they were one, and in death they were not divided.

"O Thou, who driest the mourner's tear.
How dark this world would be,
If when deceived and wounded here,
We could not flee to Thee.
. . . . . .
Oh who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not Thy wing of love
Come, brightly wafting through the gloom
Our peace-branch from above?
Then sorrow touched by Thee grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

—James C. Briggs in Trinitarian Church Bulletin.

A Power for Good.

At a meeting of the trustees of the Swain Free School, the president, William W. Crapo, offered the following minute, which was adopted and placed on record:

Since our last meeting a vacancy has occurred in the board, occasioned by the death of William L. Sayer on April 14th, 1914. He became a trustee July 10th, 1901, holding the position thirteen years.

Mr. Sayer rendered faithful and efficient service in determining the policy and guiding the conduct of the School. He contributed largely to its success and usefulness.

With gentleness of manner and sincere respect for the opinion of others he joined in our discussions, clearly and distinctly declaring his judgment.

His counsel was of great value and highly esteemed by his colleagues. We miss his wise and earnest co-operation.

In the wider activities of life his intellectual vigor, his independence of thought and his fearless expression were conspicuous. In the exercise of these qualities he was a distinct power for good in the community.

Adopted by the Woman's Club.

It is only natural that we as a club should place in permanent form on our records an expression of the loss we feel in the death of one of our best friends, Mr. William L. Sayer.

His broad outlook, his keen mind, and above all, his sanity of view, were so helpful that for years we have looked to him as our guide in current events.

His optimism concerning the out-

come of conditions, however serious or complicated, never failed to inspire us with confidence.

"Always fronting forward to the light! Always and always facing toward the right!"

His own words, spoken of another, come to help us: "What he was to us all, old and young, only a little while ago, he will always be to us now—one to mourn because he has gone away, one to remember with joy."

Lydia M. Sargent,
Ida A. McAfee,
Mabel L. Potter,
Committee.

The Funeral Service.

The funeral of William L. Sayer and of Sarah C. Sayer, his wife, was held on the afternoon of April 16th, in the Trinitarian church. Rev. John J. McClelland offered prayer; Rev. William B. Geoghegan read from the Scriptures and a poem "He Leadeth Me;" and Rev. M. C. Julien made the prayer and read the burial service. Burial was in Rural cemetery.

Bequest to Public Library.

The bequest of William L. Sayer of a collection of books, pamphlets, plates and autographs pertaining to newspapers and printing to the Free Public Library was a characteristic deed. Mr. Sayer felt that it was a requisite of good citizenship that a man should give of his time and means, as far as he could afford, to public and charitable service. This he urged upon the people in the course of his editorial career, and he never asked others to accept counsel he was not prepared to practice. A number of years ago he felt he would like to leave something to one of the institutions of the city as an expression of appreciation for the city where he had made his home. He did not say, as many might, that not having the means to make a conspicuous gift, he would do nothing, but he joined with his expenditure his special talents, in assembling a collection of works which would fill a library niche with distinction. If his example should be an incentive to others of moderate means to manifest public spirit in such a way, it would be better worth while than gifts of greater magnitude lacking in the individual thought and purpose.—The Morning Mercury.

Reminiscences by Mr. Sayer.

From "Reminiscences of Thirty-Five Years," written by Mr. Sayer for the One Hundredth Anniversary edition of The Morning Mercury, Aug. 7, 1907:

"A youthful reporter not long ago described me as 'the veteran of the New Bedford press,' and when I look over the list of the years and think of the changes that have come since I walked into The Mercury office to ask for the place of a reporter who only the day before had covered his last assignment, I am more than half inclined to think he was more than half right.

"I was pitchforked, if you please, into the newspaper business, and in a manner far foreign to that of which I had sometimes dreamed. It would not be truthful to say that I had never thought of the occupation before my call to it; for I have yet a collection of polite and emphatic declinations to take me into the service of newspapers all over New England. Sometimes when I look over them now I am struck with the unvarying courtesy of their writers; but then I was most struck with the unanimity with which they rejected my applications. Apparently the newspaper life was not for me. So I went on, as well as I could—which was not very well—with my work at the Twist Drill factory, then a small affair compared with the present big establishment.

"But one Sunday evening—the night of September 17, 1871—I heard on the street that 'Dan' Webb, The Mercury's only reporter, had fallen from the railroad bridge at Canton on the Boston & Providence railroad, to be instantly killed. The owners of the paper had previously given me a vague encouragement that at some time I might be employed by them, and I lost no time in making for the office. Nobody was there before me, except the late Warren E. Chase, then employed by The Standard as a compositor, who had gone in to say a word in my behalf; and I was engaged without much ado. The next morning the manager of the Twist Drill company released me without requiring a formal notice—I suspect he was glad to get rid of me—and I left the shop where I had worked four years and more, to enter the occupation to which I have devoted more than thirty-five years.

"That is the way I came to be a newspaper man, with no especial preparation, with only a meagre education in a succession of small country schools, and with practically very little knowledge of what would be required of me. It often seems to me that the young men who now come into the newspaper occupation, from the high school or the college, and who find their work systematically planned for them and a careful oversight of all that they do, are wonderfully fortunate as compared with us of an older generation in their opportunities.

"As I look back at it all now, I am pretty sure I fell into better hands than if I had attempted the work with some other newspaper which had been my ambition. The Mercury was at that time owned by Charles B. H. Fessenden and William G. Baker, who has been its proprietors since about 1861. Neither of them was trained in early life to the newspaper ocupation. Mr. Fessenden was a native of Sandwich, a graduate of Amherst college, had studied law and practiced in the west, where he had acquired his title of colonel from being a member of some governor's staff, and had come back to Massachusetts to dabble in politics and whatever else might present itself to him. Mr. Baker was a son of New Bedford, a quiet, refined, scholarly man, who was drawn to the newspaper business on account of its quasi-literary character. In their hands, The Mercury was carried on in a sort of happy-go-lucky way. Mr. Fessenden had some office to which he devoted a good share of his time. Mr. Baker supervised the business of the institution, though its direction was largely in the hands of Stephen W. Booth, who had been in the business office since his boyhood, and who had come to be the bookkeeper and the general manager. Between them, Mr. Fessenden and Mr. Baker carried on the editorial functions and the care of getting up the paper. Each contributed a share of the editorial articles, having alternate days of duty in this respect. Each, too, took charge of the office on alternate

nights, usually until about midnight. After that, the conduct of affairs was generally left to the foreman of the composing room, and after I had been there a little while, to me. On great nights, like those of an election, one of the editors would stay until the paper went to press, but ordinarily he was out of the office by twelve o'clock.

"This system of alternation had some queer results. Editorial articles did not often clash, because, by a tacit consent, Mr. Fessenden wrote all those which had to do with politics, and Mr. Baker those which dealt with more general and abstract topics. But there were some odd happenings in other ways. One of the most notable that I remember was in connection with the reporting of the famous Beecher-Tilton trial. Mr. Fessenden had been a college mate with Mr. Beecher, and was his strong friend and partisan. He was intensely indignant at all the charges and insinuations concerning Mr. Beecher's character. The trial ran on for a long time, and was quite fully reported by the Associated Press. Mr. Fessenden considered the testimony for the most part as scandalous, and on his night of duty would either suppress it altogether or condense it to a mere skeleton. What Mr. Baker thought about Mr. Beecher I never knew, but he had no qualms about printing the testimony, and on his nights it went into the paper in full. So we had the queer spectacle of an every other day report of one of the most sensational and absorbing trials this country has ever seen. I suspect that no other newspaper in this country adopted such a plan. Occasionally some other subject was treated in the same way, and both the partners appeared to take it as a matter of course. If they ever had any open disagreement concerning these matters, they so managed that none of their employes ever knew.

"But these two men were both wonderfully good friends to me, and bore patiently with my crudities, and my bunglings, and my general lack of fitness for the work. I do not recall that either of them was ever impatient, while they were always helpful. The nearest that either of them ever came to a reproof was when I was assigned to write an obituary notice of the late George M. Eddy, who was a leading—possibly the leading—dry-goods merchant of this city. I remember that I referred to him as a 'venerable' man. He certainly had looked so to me, chiefly, I suppose, because he wore the Quaker garb and was somewhat grave of countenance. For some reason which I do not recall, the copy went in without revision by either of the editors. The next time Colonel Fessenden saw me, he greeted me with, 'Sayer, do you think I'm venerable?' 'Why, no,' I stammered. 'Well,' he responded, 'I'm older than Mr. Eddy was.' That was all; but somehow I have never liked the word 'venerable' since.

"And, indeed, I do not suppose anybody ever thought of Colonel Fessenden as being venerable, though he lived to a good old age. He was youthful in his feelings to the end, and with his youthful feelings he retained much of his youthful demeanor, even when his head had long been whitened by the passing of the years. Colonel Fessenden was a writer of the vigorous school, clean-cut, direct, decisive, and comprehensive. He knew precisely what he thought, and he had the faculty of putting his thoughts into such words that all his readers would know. I can see him now, writing in his quick, nervous way, straight at his theme, rarely stopping to find a word, or to change a word. To all appearance, his article was finished in his head before he took up his pen, and all he had to do was like the mechanical work of an amanuensis. It was a tradition about the office when I went there, that he had been asked to become the chief editorial writer of a great metropolitan daily. Whether the rumor was true or not, I never knew. He, at least, never said anything to me about it, even in the after years when I had long ceased to be his employe, and had become his familiar friend. He would have succeeded well, I have no question, in such a place. To his influence, and interest, and unfailing friendship, continued after his removal from this city, and up to the day of his death, I owe much of whatever small skill I may have acquired in the work to which I have now devoted so many years. Colonel Fessenden was not an all-round newspaper man, as we see newspaper men today. Newsgathering and news presenting were not his strong points. But he was a clear thinker and a forceful editorial writer, —and an upright man, who taught by precept and example the value of straightforward honesty.

"His partner, Mr. Baker, was of another type—more reserved, less dashing, of perhaps a keener and subtler wit, eminently graceful in his literary composition, but not as vigorous. He was about the office most of the day, and on his alternate evenings, so that naturally I saw a great deal of him. Few more unfailingly courteous gentlemen ever lived, but there was nothing of the effusive about him. He did not act the part of the hail-fellow-well-met with anybody, but with his intimates his friendships appeared to me to be unusually strong. I recall as frequent visitors to him in the office the late William J. Potter, and the brothers Thomas R. and Edmund Rodman, and well remember the flow of interesting talk which always came with their appearances. Mr. Baker could not

forget his habit of courtesy with even the most exasperating kickers. The nearest he ever came to losing his temper so far as I ever saw, was when a persistent communication writer whose penmanship was apt to be illegible, came in to complain that his articles were never printed correctly. If they had been, considering the quality of his handwriting, we should have scented a miracle in the composing room. Mr. Baker was apologetic at first, but the caller was not to be placated. He persisted in restating his grievance in more offensive language. Finally, without raising his voice, and in the blandest and suavest of tones, Mr. Baker observed, 'Well, if I were you, I wouldn't write for The Mercury any more.' My memory is that he did not.

"Mr. Baker, like Mr. Fessenden, was scarcely fitted to meet the demands of newspaper life, though he had fine literary taste, and exceptional power of literary expression. But the drudgery of the every day work was irksome, and the pettiness and routine fretted him. If he had not been of an equable and genial temperament, he would have been worried into misanthropy. As it was, he set us all the example of doing his best, and doing it cheerfully, in a place for which he was not well adapted, and under conditions which were not encouraging. I am not sure that this is not, in its way, the mark of a successful life. . . . .

"Well, as I have intimated, I found my employers not expecting too much of me, as was well, for they ran less risk of being disappointed. My first assignment was to write a paragraph about the ferry boat Union, which had been undergoing repairs and which had come on the line on the day of my advent into The Mercury office. As I remember it now, I wrote ten or twelve lines, very prim and not very illuminating, and turned it in to Mr. Baker, who received it without comment and poked it through the hole-in-the-wall which furnished communication between editorial room and composing room. The next day after that I began on police court reporting. In a day or two General Benjamin F. Butler, then a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor, came down here to speak in city hall in his own behalf, and I was sent to report him, which I did to the extent of a column of nonpareil type. It was in the same week that they sent me to report a meeting of the city council, at which I was expected to pick up somehow what was done in both branches. I think, too, that within a day or two the new fire alarm signal went into operation, and I went out to view the system and to see the inspection by the officials. It was at this time I first met the late Benjamin F. H. Reed, in his day the star reporter of The Standard, but now, alas, hardly more than a name to the younger members of the occupation in this city. Without undertaking to describe all his characteristics and peculiarities—some of which were very individualistic and pronounced—I cannot let mention of him go by without saying how much I owe him of help and encouragement. He could not have thought I was a very dangerous rival, for he was continually, in those early days, helping me out, and my inexperience would often have played me sad tricks had it not been for his cheerful assistance. I think he never did his paper any injustice by his help of The Mercury's news-gatherer—and, if he did, I trust it was forgiven him long ago.

"Little by little, I found myself and my work; and more and more I found my employers letting me go my own way. Besides the reporting, I helped more or less in the office, sometimes staying at noon for Mr. Booth to go to dinner, writing newspaper wrappers, helping fold and mail the weekly, reading proof for both newspaper and job printing office, doing errands occasionally, and so on. It must be remembered that New Bedford was not then what it is now. The population was barely 25,000, and the principal business was what was left of whaling. That was carried on in a limited area on the water front, so far as the home work was concerned, and for the most part so far as our office was concerned was cared for by Henry B. Almy, who came, I think, about the time that I did, as a shipnews man and a bill collector. Practically, the town began at the Pearl street railway station and stopped say at Grinnell street or South street. People lived both north and south of these points, but they were out in the country. When the engine house on Purchase street, at the foot of Franklin street, was built there was an outcry because it was located "so far north." So the territory I had to cover and the affairs I had to look after were by no means as extended as those which make demands on the city editor of today. On the other hand, there were no street cars, and usually no other means of getting anywhere but by walking. There was no telephone, and it was often a tramp of a mile for the sake of getting a simple 'Yes'—or 'No'—in answer to a simple question. I recall a fire in the middle of the night somewhere in the vicinity of Willis's Point. It turned out to be quite a fire, and I had to go back to the office to be sure that the paper had an outline of the situation, and to arrange that the force of printers would stay until I got back from my second visit—making four trips on foot between The Mercury and the fire. Similar occurrences were

so common that most of them made very little impression on me. I only know that for the five years in which I was a reporter for Fessenden & Baker, there were a good many times when I went home in the morning having done what I could toward reporting a dozen different happenings in different parts of the city and perhaps in Fairhaven, under conditions which nobody would impose on the reporters of today. My employers did not impose them on me; they were the necessary accompaniment of the life as it then was. . . .

"And in those five years from 1871 to 1876, The Mercury most certainly did not prosper. There were other reasons than that of the lack of sufficient capital and the lack of capability for the business on the part of its owners. New Bedford was not very prosperous, and there was little hint of the transformation which was even then at hand. In spite of the courage of the leading ship-owners, it was clearly evident that whaling had seen its best days, and the inevitable decay was accelerated by the two great Arctic ocean disasters which occurred in this period. To be sure, the Wamsutta mills was an extraordinary successful enterprise, but there were plenty of people who expected nothing but failure of the Potomska mills, which were built in the early 70's, and nobody dreamed that any other cotton mills would ever appear. Various manufacturing enterprises on other lines had come to ignoble ends, so that the outlook for the town was far from brilliant. The career of a whaleman was no longer open to ambitious boys, and no other home career presented itself to many of them. Thus it happened that a good many of them went away from New Bedford to other parts of the country. It was the most discouraging epoch in many respects in New Bedford's history, and naturally a morning newspaper felt the effects. Fessenden & Baker had a hard struggle to maintain themselves, and we who were their workers knew it. The conditions did not arouse enthusiasm, nor inspire ambition. Had it not been for the hopefulness of youth—and possibly its ignorance—the situation would have crushed us younger men who were in the employ of The Mercury. As it was, we went along, day after day, keeping doggedly at the work, with a sort of vague faith that something would turn up to better things. And this was my apprenticeship in the newspaper business—an experience of makeshifts and contrivances to get along under the direction of two men who had lost hope that their enterprise could ever be successful.

"Well, it came to the point where something had to be done for us who were the hired men to save ourselves; and Mr. Booth and myself having induced Warren E. Chase, then a reporter for the Standard, to join us, The Mercury was purchased from Fessenden & Baker, and on the first of May, 1876, a new departure was made. It is not my purpose to recount the history of the years since then, or even to dwell on any of its incidents. Suffice it to say, that the hard work we put in, combined with the turn in the fortunes of New Bedford, finally set us on a more solid foundation than the enterprise had ever known. Let the record go at that.

"Naturally, this retrospect is more impressive to me because of the changes it suggests than for any other reason. Today not a person is employed by The Mercury who was connected with it when I made my entrance into its office—and but two or three are living. In the office of the Standard, there are two men, I think, who were its employes thirty-six years ago, and everybody else has gone. It has been my mournful satisfaction to write the last words of tribute to the memory of every one of my early associates, as I have seen them one by one drop out of the ranks of the living. Methods and ways and the scope of the work have all undergone marvellous changes. New Bedford is another city. Some of the names which were most familiar and prominent have disappeared—gone so that the younger generation scarcely knows them. In our business interests, we think different thoughts, and we talk another language. Then the thrifty artisan bought 'a piece of a ship'; now he invests in cotton mill stock. Then there was talk of 'lays'; now we hear about wage-scales. Then the terminology of the whaling business was familiar to everybody; now, nine-tenths of the population would not know whether a bowhead was a whale or a whaleboat. To go back to the newspaper office, the type-setting machine was considered as impossible as Aladdin's lamp, and nobody had devised the 'top-of-column-next-to-reading-matter' advertisement. Parenthetically, this is where the present has not improved on the past. Newspapers have discovered scores of new objects for their attention and hundreds of new ways of treating them. They have improved, too, in almost every respect, though I would be most reluctant to say that the best is yet perfect. It would be folly to regret that the past is of the past; but those of us who in some sense are of that bygone time may be pardoned if we entertain for it, and even for its shortcomings, a reverent affection which is in no way dimmed by our admiration for the achievements of the present."

The Things Most Worth While.

From Mr. Sayer's speech at the birthday dinner given in his honor Feb. 26, 1908:

"Comrades and friends: The other day George Meredith had his 80th birthday and to his friends he said that a man should not make of his eighty years a ladder to reach a pulpit from which to preach a sermon. I do not intend to preach a sermon. But the training of my boyhood, and my memories tonight bring to my mind a Bible text, 'We spend our years as a tale that is told.' Now when the curtain has risen on my sixty years, and I look back to the night when I ascended the stairs of The Mercury office to apply for a job, all that is gone seems to me like a tale that is told. The years and the perplexities that came to me, they seem like a tale that is told; my later years, pleasant and happy, seem like a tale that is told. I cannot imagine that I am the boy who had the assurance to ask for that place, made vacant by a tragedy; or the man who, a few years later, risked a little borrowed money in a very doubtful enterprise; and who was called to be the editor of the Evening Standard.

"Even tonight it seems to me like the story of somebody else. I cannot imagine it is for me to receive these compliments and honors which are far beyond what I deserve. It seems to me that the people before me are phantoms and that I am going to wake up and find that this too is all a dream. . . .

"If I had seen the difficulties I would encounter in making a place for myself, on the night when I went up the stairs of The Mercury office, it is likely I would have turned away and returned to the Twist Drill factory. If I could have looked forward to tonight, nothing could have prevented my going upstairs and applying for the job. Nothing has so well repaid me for the difficulties and anxieties I have experienced as seeing you men here tonight, and hearing these words, far beyond my deserts, but which, of course, are grateful. I thank you, I thank you, I thank you, and I cannot thank you enough.

"The best that I can wish you is good health, good friends, happy homes, a conscience void of offence toward God and man, modest desires and the means to gratify them, contentment, the gentle touch of gentle time,—these are what are most worth while."

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